

VZCZCXRO2090  
PP RUEHQU  
DE RUEHPU #0611 0941745  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 041745Z APR 06  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2728  
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1001  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0848  
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 0438  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0873

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 000611

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
S/CRS  
WHA/EPSC  
EB/IFD/ODF  
EB/IFD/OMA  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR LAC/CAR  
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)  
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EFIN EAID ECON PGOV HA

SUBJECT: STRIKE PROTESTING GAS PRICES FAILS

REF: PAP 554

¶11. A general strike declared by the Driver's Association of Port-au-Prince for April 3 to protest the rise in gasoline prices failed. The Association's President Jean Marie Chateau had called on Port-au-Prince residents to stay home to protest the recent rise in price of gasoline at the pump, which rose by 12 per cent as a result of increased world market prices. (Note: In Haiti, gasoline prices have an excise tax of 90 per cent based on cost, insurance and freight valuation. Gasoline prices in the provinces are ten to 20 per cent higher than in Port-au-Prince to cover additional transportation costs. End note.) However, after a slight early morning slowdown on the day of the strike, the streets were crowded with market activity, children were in school, and the usual traffic jams lined the streets of Port-au-Prince by mid-day.

¶12. Comment: A rise in the price of gasoline squeezes an already overburdened population. An increase in world market prices affects the price (or, in the case of electricity, scarcity) of everything else. Food prices increase since much of the food sold in Port-au-Prince is transported in from Haiti's outlying provinces. Already, electricity has been minimal since the government cannot afford to buy the fuel necessary to power the plants (reftel). Many Haitians, particularly in Port-au-Prince, rely on tap-taps, colorfully-decorated vans and pick-up trucks, to get around town. The tap-tap fare is fixed, but could increase as the cost of transportation rises.

SANDERSON